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ABSTRACT

In the Fifth Five Year Plan, the Indian Planning Commission recommended "democratic decentralization" to help remove disparities at the local level. Priorities were to be adult literacy and universal elementary education, with emphasis on adopting a multilevel approach to educational planning. The idea was to provide action plans at the substate levels that would consider different areas' uniqueness and involve popular representatives in the process. This volume contains three case studies illustrating different aspects of decentralized administration and plan implementation. Faced with the problems of meeting local needs, lack of infrastructure, and uneven population spread, Jammu and Kashmir sought to introduce a system allowing wider consultation concerning planning and implementation processes. This study critiques the balance of administrative responsibilities at central, state, district, and block (local) levels after the establishment of district and block development boards in the mid-1970s. The second case study describes decentralized planning in Maharashtra State since 1962, which has experienced improvements in funding, female primary school enrollments, community involvement, and interdepartmental cooperation. A third case study covers both formal and informal education in a cluster of 20 villages in Punhana, a backward block in Haryana State. The studies confirm that no single model exists for effectively implementing educational planning and management at the district or micro level. A supplementary, annotated bibliography of 50 references is appended. (MLH)

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Micro-Level Educational Planning and Management

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Case studies from INDIA

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case studies from INDIA

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PREFACE

Recent policy-making, planning and management of the education systems of countries of Asia and the Pacific are characterized by a series of fundamental rethinking in approaches and strategies.

From the previous highly centralized system of governmental support and supervision in resource allocation, curriculum development, teacher training and deployment, as well as in planning and management, emphasis these days has been shifting to the decentralization of educational administration to local levels and the devolution of decision-making power and prerogatives. This new approach aims essentially at improving the effectiveness in implementation of educational policy and plans.

This has led to the realization that true decentralization in education is not feasible without the active participation of local communities, in providing resources to the schools, and in managing them. It is the actual voluntary involvement of parents, community leaders, teachers and administrators that determines the adaptiveness of education to local conditions and requirements. The ultimate success of educational outcomes depends on the nature of this collaboration.

It is with a view to surveying the concrete approaches adopted in India in developing micro-level educational planning and management, and to sharing some of the salient experiences gained in recent years that this compilation of case studies is prepared, with the cooperation of the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration of India.

This is one of a series of Occasional Papers in Educational Planning, Management and Statistics of the UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. It contains three case studies related to the experiences in Jammu and Kashmir, Maharashtra and

the Project ARISE in Punhana, Haryana. It is hoped that through the lucid and eloquent presentations and descriptions offered by the authors, clear and useful new insights could be gained by the readers, which would contribute to guiding the spread of micro-level educational planning and management practices and competencies in each of their own countries.

Our deep appreciation goes to the authors of the case studies for their very valuable contributions. Grateful acknowledgement is due to Dr. Warren Mellor for his editorial work as well as for the Introduction which provides an excellent lead through the case studies.

To help the reader who is unfamiliar with the expressions and words of India Sub-continental origin, a glossary has been placed at the beginning of this study.

Educational Planning, Management
and Statistics Unit

GLOSSARY

Some local terms used in the text are described below. The descriptions are not intended as rigorous definitions.

Block: The smallest unit of administration for development purposes. On average, a block may have approximately 100 villages and there are more than 5000 blocks in the country. In some parts of the country, an educational block may be different from a development block.

Chappatis: A kind of bread made of flour.

Chullah: An oven.

District: A unit of administration below the state level at which all the major sectoral developments are represented. There are more than 425 districts in the country.

District Collector: The Chief District Officer is responsible for collecting revenues.

Gram Sevak: A village level worker.

Gram Panchayat: A village (gram) council (panchayat).

Gujjars & Bakrawals: Names of statutorily recognized weaker sections in Jammu & Kashmir.

Imam: One who leads in prayer and is the main interpreter of religious matter.

Lakh: One hundred thousand.

Maktab: An Arabic word for a school which generally imparts religious (Islamic) education.

Mela: A periodic fair or market in which merchandise and exhibits are displayed alongside festivities.

Panchayat Samiti: A body consisting of representatives of a cluster of villages.

Ramazan: Ninth month of the Muslim year, during all daylight hours of which rigid fasting is observed.

Sarpanch: Head of the Village Council traditionally consisting of five members.

Sub-district: See Tehsil.

Tehsil: A level of administration lower than district. It can be called Tehsil Taluka (sub-district). The latter can have more than one blocks or could be co-terminous with the block level.

Zilla Parishad: A local name for district (zilla) councils (parishad).

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INTRODUCTION

In the search for improved administrative efficiency in the implementation of educational plans, many proposals have been made for the increased devolution of powers to the micro and local levels, whether by delegation, deconcentration or decentralization. Centralization, for example, is supposed to yield benefits in terms of economies of scale, cost effectiveness and overall national equity. Decentralization is reported to promote greater responsiveness to local needs and a surer sense of the equitable distribution of resources amongst disadvantaged groups.[1] The problem remains, however, as to what constitutes the optimal balance of centralized efficiency on the one hand, and decentralized responsiveness on the other.

In the Fifth Five Year Plan, the Indian Planning Commission recommended "democratic decentralization" to assist in removing disparities at the local level. Priorities for this were to be adult literacy and Universal Elementary Education (UEE). Emphasis was placed on the need to adopt a multi level approach in planning at the state and sub-state levels. This concept was basically directed towards providing a plan of action at the sub-state levels, which would take into consideration the unique nature of different areas as regards levels of development,

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[1] *For some other examples of inter-district differences within states, see JBJ Tilak, "Educational Distance between Districts in Andhra Pradesh", in LS Bhat et al (eds), Regional Inequalities in India, 1982. See also VR Kumar, "Regional Disparities in Educational Development in Karnataka", in LS Bhat et al (eds), op cit.*

physio-geographical conditions, resource potential and the coverage and quality of economic and social services. It also emphasised the involvement of popular representatives in the process of planned development at the sub-state levels.

The following three studies from India attempt to show different aspects of decentralized administration and plan implementation, their strengths and weaknesses, the lessons that may be learned by others who may be contemplating administrative reforms.

Jammu & Kashmir

Faced with the problems of meeting local needs, lack of infrastructure, disparities, uneven population spread and so on, Jammu & Kashmir sought to introduce a system whereby there would be wider consultation and greater input to the design of development plans, together with more effective monitoring of the implementation of those plans. Decentralization of all sectors (not just education) and micro level planning and implementation were to be the aims.

Accordingly, District Development Boards were established in 1975, headed by a District Development Commissioner with administrative, operational and financial powers. Membership included officials and State and Central Government representatives, as well as members of the local communities. Coordination of the District sectoral plans remained, however, with the State Planning Department. Since 1978, Block Development Boards have been established with advisory functions as well as responsibilities for plan implementation and monitoring.

The study broaches the question of the appropriate

balance of administrative responsibilities at Central, State, District and Block (local) levels. This is, say the authors, "in some senses, a peculiar way of decentralization ... Control and decision making continue to be in the hands of the same state level officers (but) ... it may be said that decision making nevertheless has a 'local' characteristic". Norms are laid down for planning across the entire State. Financial powers remain essentially unchanged, although contributions by local communities are more readily enlisted.

The planning and administration of education have been decentralized in a parallel fashion. District officers and committees are responsible for such matters as supervision, school building and maintenance, local research and inservice education. Availability of disaggregated data in a more efficient management information system has facilitated school location planning, upgrading of schools, teacher placement, local enrolment and retention drives, provisions for disadvantaged groups, nonformal and adult education. The planning and administration of secondary and higher education have certain problems which suggest that they should remain essentially a State prerogative.

The general conclusion is that development projects administered through "democratic decentralization" tend to be greater in number but smaller in magnitude. Development efforts are spread more widely, the cause of greater equity is better served, information gathering and planning are based on more accurate district level statistical returns. While plan implementation tends to have improved, there remain the problems of finding sufficient numbers of trained personnel to carry out planning functions locally, and of ensuring that large scale development

efforts requiring longer time frames and inter-district coordination are not jeopardised.

Maharashtra

This study describes decentralized planning in the State since 1962. The mechanism is essentially through district councils within which there is an Education Committee in charge of primary school administration (such as buildings for example, but not curriculum). The execution of decisions taken in these district councils is carried out through subdistrict (block) councils.

Since 1972, the emphasis has been on multi-level planning. All districts receive financial allocations by formula from the State for which it is their responsibility to formulate priorities, encourage participatory management, and develop community resources. District Councils may also raise their own funds.

In this way, it is claimed, coordination with other Departments involved in development efforts is better, leading to improved implementation of integrated development programmes. District Planning and Development Councils coordinate the work of District Councils with that of other outside agencies, as well as monitoring the implementation process including expenditure against budget. Special projects can be tailored to the needs of disadvantaged groups such as tribal populations. Coordination of district projects remains, nonetheless, with the State Department.

Some other benefits are claimed for democratic decentralization in the case of Maharashtra, including quantitative expansion of primary school

enrolments (particularly amongst females), greater local community involvement, interdepartmental coordination, and the fostering of favourable political will in overall development efforts. Local knowledge has been brought to bear on planning and monitoring projects to meet special needs. On the other hand, some of the problems admitted include the lack of sufficient planning expertise at the micro-level, and an increased level of politicization of the educational enterprise particularly involving teacher associations. Projects and courses of action are sometimes the outcome of lobbying or consensus decision making, rather than expertise and objective analysis. There is a need for greater involvement of voluntary agencies in the decision making process.

Action Research Case Study

This study is based on the premise that micro-level planning and management are vital for pursuing an integrated approach to the development process. Project ARISE (Action Research for Implementation Strategies in Education) covers both formal and nonformal education in a cluster of 20 villages in Punhana, a very backward block of Haryana State. Through a 'sector-specific' project based on universal elementary education, it pursues an ultimate goal of integrated development through self-reliant community involvement. By adopting a 'problem-centred' approach, it is intended to raise the demand for educational services by demonstrating relevance to daily living in a rural community.

A survey was conducted of literacy levels whereby the 20 villages chosen for study were ranked in terms of absolute numbers and percentages of illiterates. Socio-economic variables used included sex, caste, age, income, and occupation (cultivators, manual

labourers, service occupations, and shopkeepers). The action research techniques and strategies utilized by the researchers to mobilize community participation included orientation programmes for village women, involvement of religious leaders, and the establishment of village education committees.

Some of the features of this project are claimed to be unique, for example the fact that it was undertaken by a semi-statutory body (seen as representative of neither government nor of voluntary agencies). Moreover, the project utilized non-monetary incentives to mobilize local community involvement. The focus was on organizational and management aspects of the development effort, particularly in regard to education which was seen as the key sector in the implementation of an integrated approach. Project workers were seen by local villagers as 'co-workers' with the villagers, and education was shown to be relevant because useful.

Naturally, some problems are encountered in the implementation of any project. For example, increased demands for educational services outstretched the existing provisions of educational facilities. But nonetheless there have been some striking successes such as a steep increase in enrolment figures, particularly amongst girls, and the establishment of village learning centres for adult education and nonformal education. Increased demands upon agencies in other sectors indicate progress in using education as an entry point in the total development process.

Conclusions

The studies tend to confirm that there is not simply one model for the effective implementation of educational planning and management at the district

or micro level. It appears to be necessary to adopt a gradualist approach, developing organizational and administrative structures that are endogenous or locally appropriate. An effective starting point is often to adapt and build upon the very personnel, mechanisms, delivery systems and infrastructures that already exist. Local committees that mobilize community involvement, supported by local leaders and attracting the political commitment of State level personnel, are very important. The education sector, specifically local education committees, might serve as an ideal entry point for local development generally.

Infrastructures such as the local education committees need to focus their endeavours in the first instance on concerns of local priority and of manageable proportions. Such a problem centred approach will more likely ensure that projects are relevant, that they serve as a rallying point for local community support, and that they demonstrate the success which promotes future commitment. Specifically educational concerns that have fulfilled these roles best include enrolment drives amongst disadvantaged groups, adult and nonformal programmes for dropouts and illiterates, fund raising for specific development projects, school mapping and facilities location exercises, and local surveys for data collection and information gathering.

As there is typically a lack of significant technical planning and management skills at the local level, it is important in the first instance that local committees be given an important place in monitoring the implementation of plans. There is an urgent need for training programmes in the technical skills of local planning and management. Such training programmes will focus in part on the development of

management information systems and quantitative skills such as trend analysis and projection (possibly by the application of computer techniques). But they will also address local needs analysis, priority setting, identification of target groups, mobilization of community support, problem solving, decision making and communication skills, meeting procedures and so on. The planning and management skills that are needed combine the quantitative (facts and figures) to promote objective situational analysis, and the more qualitative interpersonal skills for working towards consensus with politicized vested interest groups.

All of this is not to deny a continuing role for State level agencies, particularly in educational development. It is difficult to envisage a situation where local communities should be called upon to be wholly self-reliant. State level agencies will have an important role to play, for example, in providing financial allocations from general taxation revenue to local agencies and organizations. It is clear that for this reason alone, if no other, the State will continue to have a voice in determining overall plan priorities, in establishing norms which are intended to mitigate disparities amongst geographical areas and disadvantaged community groups and so on. Locally determined priorities and projects need to be viewed in relation to a longer term, state-wide framework. Future-oriented projects calling for high level technical expertise and large capital funds of importance to all districts (or certainly more than one) must continue to be given due prominence. And there will always be a need to view sector specific projects in an integrated way, calling upon the necessary coordination amongst voluntary agencies, statutory bodies and other organizations engaged in the tasks of social and economic development.

DECENTRALIZED PLANNING in JAMMU & KASHMIR

Satya Bhushan and Brahm Prakash

Since independence, committed efforts have been made to bring about development in Jammu & Kashmir, with many plans and programmes launched to ensure the prosperity and welfare of the inhabitants. The planning and implementation of these development thrusts, being an integral part of the overall strategy of development in India, were characterized by a dominant role for the Union and State Governments.

However, the state was remotely located, the spread of population was uneven, the distribution of infrastructure was extremely deficient, and different kinds of small socio-cultural habitats were spread all over the state. It was soon realized that purely state-determined development plans would not be effective in bringing development to the masses. The idea of local designing of plans and programmes suggested itself as a probable step in furtherance of the goals of development.

It was felt that remotely-placed district officials should be given freedom to devise plans according to local conditions and requirements.[1] It was this idea that lay behind the pattern and process of decentralization in the state and that was instrumental in making the state a forerunner in the process

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[1] *The district, a unit of administration below the state level, is headed by an officer of the Indian Administrative Services who is seconded to the different states. A district is further sub-divided into blocks.*

of decentralized planning. Within the state, it was the most backward district of Ladakh in which decentralized development was first begun, followed later by the district of Doda. The entire process is only a little more than a decade old.[2]

Decentralization in Jammu & Kashmir

It was in 1975 that District Development Boards (DDB) were set up in the state. In addition to the officers of the sectoral departments under the leadership of the District Collector, the Boards also included elected members of the State and Central legislatures, the local Panchayat and other leaders, as well as some representatives of minorities and other weaker sections of society.

In 1976, state-wide district planning was adopted formally as a part of "single line administration" with two main objectives:

a) making planning more reflective of the hopes and aspirations of the common man; and
b) ensuring speedy implementation of development programmes.[3]

An extensive restructuring of the District Development Boards was undertaken. DDB's had to meet

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[2] *The description of decentralization here is based on Status Paper 11 prepared for the Working Group on District Planning under the chairmanship of Professor C H H Rao. See Report of the Working Group on District Planning, Vol.II (mimeo), Government of India, Planning Commission, May 1984.*

[3] *Report op cit p50*

at least three times a year to help in planning, mid-course monitoring and final evaluation. Along with this, there was a provision for the entire Cabinet of State Ministers to meet at the district level once a year. Such meetings were to incorporate extensive interaction with popular representatives, enabling local issues to be raised and decisions to be taken on the spot. Because "all district level officers of the concerned district remain in attendance during the meeting", the modus operandi enabled quick decisions and cut down the gap between state level planners, implementing officers and beneficiaries. Wherever administrative orders by competent authority were needed, they could be issued immediately from the state headquarters after the district level meetings were over.

To make the process operational, it was necessary to invest key officials with sufficient administrative and operational powers. Different kinds of financial sanctioning and disbursement powers had to be invested with the District Collector so that he could serve as local head of the other sectoral departments. Designated as District Development Commissioner (DDC), he emerged as the pivot of the entire district level planning. His main task was to coordinate all the development sectors operating in the district. Sectoral officers had to carry out their day to day tasks with the concurrence of the DDC while still operating within the framework of their departments at the state level. For example, sectoral officers posted at the block level could not be transferred without the concurrence of the DDC.

Similarly, additional powers were required so that appropriate construction works could be undertaken beyond the normal limits of the district officials' authority. The DDC was invested with powers "to

effect intra-sectoral diversions, (although these) have to be referred to the Planning Department for the latter's prior concurrence".[4] The onus of verifying overall consistency among the sectors thus continued to lie with the Planning Department at State level.

For implementing district level planning, it was necessary to develop an elaborate, reliable and up-to-date system of district level statistics. A district level statistical agency was therefore set up. It was also decided to have a District Statistical Handbook prepared every two years to help in evaluating the infrastructure available in an individual district as compared with the rest of the state.

Accordingly, a district planning unit was set up, partly as a modal agency, partly to maintain liaison with the Department of Planning at state level and the planning units at block level. The state level Planning Department continued to determine broad sectoral outlays, intimating these to the DDC whose responsibility it was to see that a detailed plan was formulated by the district planning unit in consultation with various Heads of Departments. Once such a draft plan was ready, it could be put to the DDB for vetting and discussions. The DDB also was involved in monitoring implementation of the plans and seeing that the different target groups gained from the development process. The area officers engaged in implementation of the plan were to report to the DDB and to be answerable to it.

Since 1978, the process has been carried closer to the grass roots as block level planning has also been

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[4] *Report op cit p 52*

introduced in the state. Block Development Boards have been set up with three primary functions: advisory (for district plan formulation); plan formulation (at the block level); and monitoring of different development schemes in the field. Plan formulation relates particularly to programmes like child development, integrated rural development, national rural employment, location of schools, dispensaries, animal husbandry centres, and small industrial units. Construction of schools, particularly with the help of local contributions from the community, comes under the purview of block level planning.

Educational Planning and Management

Throughout India, no less than in Jammu & Kashmir, education has been given a prominent place in the development process.[5] It was felt that a well-educated population was an outcome of, as well as an important factor in, the development process. Priorities for educational development have been:

(i) provision of free education through all stages;

(ii) provision of compulsory education by 1989-90 for all children in the 6-14 years age cohort;

(iii) adoption of the national pattern of education of 10+2+3 with emphasis

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[5] *Description of the educational system in Jammu & Kashmir is based on a "Diagnostic Study of Educational Administration and Planning in Jammu & Kashmir" prepared for the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration as a background document for the diagnostic study sponsored by Unesco ROEAP, Bangkok.*

on diversifying and vocationalizing of secondary and higher education;

(iv) development of nonformal education for leftouts, dropouts and failures;

(v) promotion of literacy among adults in the age group 15-35 years;

(vi) improvement in the quality of education with the help of necessary material and training inputs;

(vii) strengthening of educational administration and supervision.

As with development planning generally, educational planning has been restructured along multi-level lines, with different layers of decision making responsibility. At the highest level is the State, followed by district and block levels, while still lower are the villages and habitations in which educational institutions are located.

At the state level, there is a Secretariat of Education responsible for articulation of education policy, plan formulation, coordination with other development departments, budget, control over grants, monitoring of schemes and general administration. There are also two Directorates which look after different aspects such as formal education, nonformal education and teacher education. (In other states of India, Directorates are sometimes further subdivided by level or stages of education such as primary, middle, secondary and higher education).

There is a corresponding hierarchy in the functions performed by education officers at State, District

or Tehsil/Block levels.[6] For example, the Education Department at state level plans educational programmes, collects educational statistics, undertakes educational surveys, and plans the educational infrastructure (such as opening and upgrading schools). Higher education programmes are also covered at the state level.

District level officers, on the other hand, deal largely with school education. The District Education Officer is engaged in elaboration, implementation and monitoring of plans within the context of his own district.[7] District officials plan for educational programmes according to the norms and sectoral outlays which are set by the Education Department at state level. Since 1976, however, there has also been provided a district level educational planner who helps in formulating district educational plans within the state sectoral allocations on the one hand, and the priorities and guidelines fixed at district level on the other.

Tehsil and block level educational officers are also involved in the implementation of educational

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[6] *The description in this section is based on "Planning and Management of Resources for Educational Development at Micro Level - A Case Study of an Indian State (J&K)" by M M Kapoor, delivered at the Unesco Regional Development Workshop on Micro Level Educational Planning and Management held at NIEPA, October 14 - November 2, 1985.*

[7] *For a simple description of educational planning at a district level, see Tilak and Varghese, "Educational Planning at District Level: An Exercise on Gurgaon District (Haryana)". Margin, April 1985.*

plans.[8] At the block level, for example, there is an officer who is in charge of supervision and inspection of elementary schools, who serves as the drawing and disbursing officer for all primary and middle schools and nonformal education centres in the block, and who supervises enrolment and school level committees.

District Level Educational Planning

The District Education Officer (DEO) is in charge of both boys' and girls' wings and is responsible for the functioning of all types of schools except at +2 level. In the context of decentralized planning and management, his role has assumed added importance as he has to represent the Education Department in the District Development Board. His functions include the following:

a) monitoring the performance and assessing the needs of officers and institutions in the district;
b) supervising nonformal and adult education programmes;
c) attending to personnel matters;
d) serving as a member of the district recruitment board for teacher appointments;
e) serving as head of the district purchasing committee for furniture, other permanent equipment and consumable articles.

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[8] *For an example of problems in planning and managing education at the block level, see M Raza, "Problems and Methods of Educational Administration at the Block and Institutional Levels: India", Bangkok: Unesco, 1984.*

A District Education Officer in Jammu & Kashmir is supported by an Additional DEO, District Youth Project Officer, Adult Education Officer and District Educational Planning Officer. While it is the DEO who provides the basic material for the district level educational plan, it is the District Educational Planning Officer who plays a critical role in formulating the plan itself. The state level Assistant Director (Planning, Statistics and Survey) carries out the actual task of finally preparing the plan document. This ensures some methodological uniformity across all districts in the state.

All officers are responsible for inspecting and supervising the institutions under their charge, visiting each educational institution at least once a year. While the Block Educational Officer remains in charge and responsible for primary and middle level schools (about forty to seventy in number), the District Education Officer looks after the secondary schools in the district (about thirty-five to forty in number). The Chief Education Officer is responsible for all the Higher Secondary Schools. On average, a District Education Officer spends from seven to ten days a month touring institutions in his jurisdiction, while a Block Education Officer is expected to be out in the field for as many as twelve to fifteen days a month.

There are also in Jammu & Kashmir various committees involved in the planning process, such as District Level School Construction Committees which were especially established to monitor school building programmes with the help of local initiatives. Most of the elementary school buildings are constructed using local initiative with the assistance of the National Rural Employment Programme and using norms applicable throughout the state.

A District Institute of Education (DIE) has been set up in each district as an agency of the State Institute of Education to cater to the needs of educational research, extension and training. The functions of these DIE's include:

a) organization of preservice and inservice training, largely for elementary teachers;
b) conduct of workshops, seminars and other kinds of training programmes for inservice teachers in general;
c) development of teachers' subject guides and undertaking of projects in arts and crafts;
d) dissemination and introduction of improved techniques and practices in educational institutions;
e) coordination of research activities in selected areas of education;
f) promotion of work experience and extension activities.

An Appraisal of Decentralization

From one point of view, the case of Jammu & Kashmir may be seen as a "peculiar" form of decentralization. Control and decision making continue to be in the hands of the same state level officers as previously, although it is true that they now have more than only file "notes" upon which to base their decisions. In fact their initiative is increased under such conditions.

Financial commitments, the tax burden and the devolution of benefits remain almost unchanged. But to the extent that better decision making in regard to public investment is made possible by this method,

it may tentatively be hypothesized that second-order effects must be in favour of the local community.

Though the intention of these measures was to promote the development of the districts according to their factor endowment, there does not seem to be evidence of any detailed techno-socio-economic surveys at the district level and it thus seems hardly possible that integrated planning can occur. The status paper observes that "planning has so far been based on the sectoral concept while the spatial aspects enter into the plan process incidentally".[9] Nonetheless, awareness of the need to develop the requisite know-how is increasing, and integrated district level planning rightly remains the goal of state level deliberations.

Another important feature of district level planning in Jammu & Kashmir is that the District Collector is set apart from other district officials in fulfilling his role as District Development Commissioner. In coordinating all sectoral departments within the district, he emerges as a relatively more powerful official. All area bound development models envisage the need for creating such a post as a reference point for all others. Given these powers, inter-sectoral coordination is constrained only by the extent to which the District Development Commissioner can provide leadership to his team of officers, while his responsibility to the District Development Board ensures that the system does not degenerate into a one-man show. He is also empowered to make inter-sectoral transfers with the concurrence of the Planning and Finance Departments, catching up several other funds such as the Child Development Scheme, the National Rural Employment Programme and

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[9] *Report op cit p 52*

the Integrated Rural Development Programme.

Depending upon the manner in which meetings are conducted, they may provide an enhanced opportunity for local input into planning. Certainly, due to a larger participation of the masses, the general rush for development projects has increased tremendously. A larger number of smaller schemes and projects tends to be favoured rather than heavy investment-oriented projects and resources are thus spread rather thinly across the district. While on the one hand this may promote distributive justice by increasing the number of beneficiaries, on the other hand the engineering heavy investment projects tend to be anaemic due to a shortage of allocations (with consequent time and cost over-runs).

This is a common planning problem - that is, choosing between many small projects with maximum spread effect or a critical large project with maximum technology impact. The choice is actually between short run and long run planning horizons, and these would co-exist in a balanced manner within a rational planning frame. It is necessary that high technology solutions be identified for each district and that short term projects be woven around the main activity. Development of such "investment portfolios" requires that members of the District Development Board and the inhabitants of the district be educated about them and involved in their formulation.

But districts have not yet been able to produce long term perspective plans, in part because there are not enough adequately trained personnel at the district level. Moreover, an investment portfolio which has spillovers outside the district tends to be an unattractive proposition. Power, for example, was not kept on the agenda of district level planning.

Synchronization of individual district plans with overall state plans is not possible as an inter district coordination mechanism does not exist. The existing model of exclusively state or district level planning seems unlikely to ensure a wholesome frame for development over all the state. What is needed is to identify within a common framework the optimal levels of planning for different sectors, depending on their resource base, technology and impact on beneficiaries.

Some Implications for Educational Planning

(i) Elementary Education

As the nature of this activity is rather local, it stands to reason that, with the help of a district level plan, the spread of elementary education can be assured in a more orderly fashion. School mapping and location planning of new schools is relatively easier with more disaggregated demographic data. Upgrading of schools falls into the same category where the size of individual school enrolments is known along with the rate at which gradewise movement of students is taking place. So, too, rationalization of teachers across schools can be done much more easily as, with disaggregated data, one can find out the institutions with surplus teachers as well as those which are deficient. The teacher-pupil allocation can be improved without necessarily increasing the burden on the exchequer.

Enrolment drives focussed on certain specific habitations can also be launched with the help of local level planning. It can help in solving both kinds of problems: dealing with new enrolments; and improving the retention of enrolled pupils. The special groups within a society which may not be

participating in the educational system can be easily identified and their problems and reasons can be examined in detail so that the educational planner can launch suitable interventions.

Similarly, collection of information and its analysis can be done far more easily. Standardized proforma and coding sheets can be developed on which easily comparable educational and allied data can be compiled. With the introduction of district level planning, Jammu & Kashmir also instituted a state-wide management information system. It was felt that it enabled much more objective decision making in the area of educational planning and management. By developing such kinds of district level planning, the state improved plan implementation and enhanced the organizational efficiency of the system.

Similarly, it would seem that the programme for improving school building also registered much progress. First, it was possible for the district administration to gauge the magnitude of the job which needed to be done for providing better school buildings. Their information and the assessment about the school building was much more accurate due to the fact that they were collecting the information locally. Secondly, district officials, having knowledge of other development and employment programmes, were in a position to utilize these for the purposes of educational development. Hence a fruitful dove-tailing of these two informations could, and actually did, pave the way for improvement in school buildings. Thirdly, provision for involving popular contribution at the Panchyat Samiti (local committee for a cluster of villages/habitations) can also be put to effective use when the concerned officials are operating closer to the grass roots. They can assess properly how much contribution can be

mobilized through the community and how much can be chipped in from other development departments and rural schemes. The official provision has been that if a community can collect 25 per cent of contribution, the state exchequer can contribute the remaining 75 per cent to build standardized and norm-based schools. However, once this kind of creative partnership gets built into the development programmes, the actual contribution of the community can be further increased. The provision for school building can be much better than the norms laid down for the entire state.

(ii) Norms Based Planning

The basic argument behind the norm based planning is related to the concept of the unit of analysis. By examining/analysing the obtained pattern of educational development, one can work out the quantities of different inputs which would yield the best results in a given situation. It takes into account the nature of inputs, their mutual relationship, their fiscal burden and their overall impact on a school. There is a built-in assumption here that if those proportions are followed, each of the inputs gets utilized to the maximum extent possible and that probably there is no room for improvement without committing large doses of additional investment. It is in this context that the state tends to have different models of schools: single teacher schools with only the first few classes, two teacher schools with all five primary grades and so on. Corresponding to these are the building norms. Depending upon the number of teachers and students in a school, the provision of classrooms and other buildings can be decided. Quite naturally, the selection of these types of school varies from habitation to habitation. The district administration

is in a position to choose a particular type of school for each of the habitations.[10]

One of the major advantages of such norm based planning is that it takes away a certain amount of arbitrariness from the decision makers. More importantly, it protects them from undue pressure from the local political leadership. In some ways, it recognizes the environment in which planning is being implemented in the state. By giving away the choice of decision making but not permitting it to sway in terms of contents, one is virtually decomposing a decision into its two components. One is also giving freedom to decide about one component, say location of a school, but not about the other, say number of teachers in the school. From the point of view of decentralization, it certainly is an important way of bringing decision making to the lower level and yet not allowing it to be a completely open system. In spite of the fact that such a method is followed, we have several instances where schools are sanctioned without commensurate provision of amenities and other inputs. However, while the arguments in favour of norm based planning are many, it needs to be recognized that it is indicative of only a partial approval of decentralized planning.

It also needs to be observed that district level planning as adopted by the state has also strengthened its capability to deal with weaker sections of society. Particular attention has been paid to the Gujjars and Bakarwals in the state. The fact that the district administration had a clear

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[10] *Analysis of norm based planning is contingent upon unit cost analysis of which there are few systematic state-wide studies. See, for example, the work of G D Sharma and Mridula Sharma, and of Tilak.*

directive to assist them and extend opportunities of educational development had been a source of much encouragement to them.

(iii) Nonformal Education

Similar observations can be made about nonformal and adult education programmes, both of which are best served from planning at district level rather than from a distance. For example, it is hardly possible for planners to come to terms with issues such as "school stay-outs" without studying them empirically in the field at close quarters.[11] Adult education programmes have almost to be custom-made in order to make them effective.

Jammu & Kashmir is, in fact, one of the nine most educationally backward states in the country. It has a large number of children in the 6-14 age group who are not enrolled in formal schooling. The rate of literacy in the state is also below the all-India average. Hence there is a large number of potential clientele for both formal and nonformal educational programmes. Although district level planning has improved the educational picture in the state, it has not as yet caught up with the average level of educational development in the country as a whole.

(iv) Secondary and Higher Education

For the entire country, the percentage of Grade 1 students surviving into secondary education is 23.4%. Generally these students come from better socio-economic classes. In the hilly, predominantly rural state of Jammu & Kashmir, class polarization is

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[11] *See Prakash, "What Ails Universalization of Education?". EPA Bulletin, 1, 2 (January 1985), p27.*

greater than elsewhere in India and accordingly the student population up to Grade 8 falls into two mutually exclusive categories: those who are more likely to go into secondary and higher secondary education; and those who are prone to finish or drop out before that level. The state thus has a "fractured" student population, with better-off students in post-primary schools and the poorer not able to make it to that level.

Moreover, the provision of such post-primary institutions has a tendency to cluster around larger, better-off habitations, thus serving unequally the remotely-placed, poorer students. The kind of district planning which has been adopted by the state is not likely to counteract this feature effectively because the opening of schools is going to be based on the same norm of having a certain number of Grade 8 graduates. Socio-economic analysis of students at the district level should be carried out to verify such hypotheses.

In addition, diversification of secondary education would serve particularly those for whom such schooling is likely to be terminal. But in order to diversify, information is required about the different occupational categories into which terminal students could enter. Since the information would have to be fairly disaggregated, the modality of district planning should be particularly suitable. However, there is no evidence that such a detailed analysis has been taken up in the state. This is even more true of the programme of vocationalization at '+2' level which tends to be bookish, archaic and rather dysfunctional.

Such arguments assume even greater significance in regard to higher education where the expenditure

involved is several times more than that at lower levels. The planning of higher education in both general and technical areas should be developed to further students' careers, help the employer in acquiring requisite skills and knowledge, and help the development of the state's economy to maximize its distributive and technological potential.

District level planning is not a sufficiently effective instrument for the development of higher education. Higher education needs to be split into two components: one which could be used within the district, and the other which has potential for the regional labour market. Both of these approaches would require a detailed manpower analysis which it has not been possible to develop so far in the state at the district level.[12]

Conclusion

This paper has been set out in three broad sections. In the first, a general model of district level planning in the state of Jammu & Kashmir was presented. In the second, a broad description was given of how education fits into this pattern. The third section discussed the process of district level planning with particular focus on educational development and analysed the limitations of the model as currently practised in the state.

In summary, the key element which drove Jammu & Kashmir towards district level planning was the lack of proper and sufficient infrastructure. This necessitated giving additional, but not unconstrained, powers to local district level officials.

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[12] *See Report op cit para 16, p 53.*

The entire cabinet was brought to the district, enabling state level officials to "see for themselves" the state of development in the districts. To a large extent, these senior officials exercised their powers on the spot and could monitor district level proposals before accepting them for state funding. Most of the plans thus had the benefit of joint and quick approval. That left only the implementation of programmes in the hands of district officials, in particular the District Development Boards which included elected and popular representatives as members. It is to the credit of the state that a new equilibrium was achieved in this model of district level planning.

But, as the availability of technical professional personnel was not easy either at state or district level, and as the data base of the districts was rather weak, only descriptive and simplistic issues could be tackled. More complex issues such as power, manpower planning, regional analysis or integrated economic planning had to be shelved for the time being.

In comparison, the organizational management of development in general, and of the education sector in particular, responded to the innovation rather positively. Locational mapping of educational facilities, upgrading of schools, rationalization of teachers and so on were carried out far more effectively. The state emerged as a leader in terms of instituting district, as well as block, level planning officers, although the operation continued to be more in the nature of plan implementation than of planning as such. The latter continued to be carried out in sectoral terms and was carried out at the state level.

The limited innovation has brought heartening results, but they are still marginal as compared with the task to which the state has to attend. Now, with a decade of experience in district planning, the time is probably ripe for further improving the methodology of planning in the state.

DECENTRALIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING IN INDIA: THE MAHARASHTRA EXPERIENCE

V A Kalpande

Association of local bodies with educational administration is not a new phenomenon. In Maharashtra, it goes back to 1919 when the process of transferring primary educational administration to the local bodies got impetus. District School Boards were constituted to look after the development and management of elementary education in the district. The Boards were autonomous bodies. Other development activities were looked after by district local boards.

After independence, there was a good deal of thinking about the new role of decentralized planning and the term "democratic decentralization" became a key item in the election manifestos of political parties. The National Development Council, while critically reviewing the progress of community development programmes, noted that these have not been able to evoke much popular interest and initiative. Local interest and initiative would not be forthcoming unless there was participation from popular representatives, and unless democratic institutions vested with adequate administrative powers and financial resources were established. In order to study this problem, in 1959 the National Development Council appointed a Committee on Plan Projects (COPP) under the Chairmanship of the late Shri Balwantrai Mehta. The main features of the Panchayati Raj institutions recommended by the Balwantrai Mehta Committee are as follows:

(i) a single representative and vigorous democratic institution should take charge of all aspects of development work in rural areas,
(ii) the body should be statutory, elected, comprehensive in its duties and functions, equipped with necessary executive power and in possession of adequate resources,
(iii) there should not be too many governmental controls over the body.

During the last few years various attempts have been made in India to introduce decentralized planning. In the state of Maharashtra the process was made operational in 1962 by constituting Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis. Studies have shown that the experiment has been institutionalized and can be considered quite successful. The State has made significant progress in all sectors of the economy and is known for the innovativeness and participation of the community in implementation of the development projects.

Organizational Set-up

As per the recommendations of COPP, the Zilla Parishads (district councils) were formed in Maharashtra under the Maharashtra Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis Act (1961) to look after all-round development activities in rural areas. Under the provisions of this act, the administration of primary education was transferred from District School Boards to Zilla Parishads.

A Zilla Parishad is composed of the elected representatives of the rural areas and may also

include coopted members for special reasons. Every district of the state (except Greater Bombay) has a Zilla Parishad consisting of chairmen of all the Panchayat Samitis (usually having a cluster of villages) in the district, councillors (between 40 and 60) chosen by direct election from electoral divisions (representing not more than 40,000 population each) in the district and chairmen of four cooperative societies conducting business or activities in relation to credit, marketing, industrial cooperatives and cooperative training or education. The elected councillors can coopt two women members if they do not have any women members among them. The chairmen of all the Panchayat Samitis are ex officio members of the Zilla Parishads. The term of office for the Zilla Parishad and its elected councillors is limited to five years.

The work of each Zilla Parishad is carried out through a standing committee and seven subcommittees. The chairmen of the subcommittees are elected by councillors of the Zilla Parishad. In addition, persons having special knowledge and experience in respect of the terms of reference allotted to the relevant subcommittees are coopted as members.

It is the Education Committee of the Zilla Parishad which is entrusted with the details of policy matters and administrative work related to school education. It is responsible for establishment, management, maintenance, inspection and supervision of primary schools including grants to aided schools, but not the laying down of syllabi or the prescription of text books. It is responsible for construction and maintenance of primary school buildings of the Zilla Parishad, provision of equipment and playgrounds and other educational objects for schools. An Education Officer, who heads the education department of the

Zilla Parishad and belongs to the Maharashtra Educational Service (Class I) works as ex officio secretary of the Education Committee.

The elected chairman of the Education Committee presides over and conducts its meetings. He is authorised to call for any information, written statements, accounts or report from any officer employed by, or holding office under, the Zilla Parishad. In relation to the terms of reference allotted to the Education Committee, he is authorised to inspect any immovable property occupied by the Zilla Parishad, any institution under the control and management of the Zilla Parishad, or any work or development scheme in progress undertaken by the Zilla Parishad.

The Chief Executive Officer, who belongs to the Indian Administrative Service, heads the entire administrative machinery of the Zilla Parishad. All executive powers are vested in him. He can delegate any of his power to any officer of the Zilla Parishad. As such, there are wide variations in the powers enjoyed by the Education Officers in different districts of the State.

Although the Zilla Parishad is an apex organization at the district level, the execution of its decisions takes place at the block level through Panchayat Samitis. The Block Development Officer (BDO) works as ex officio secretary to the Panchayat Samiti. As regards the execution of Zilla Parishad resolutions, decisions, accounts and records, each Panchayat Samiti is responsible to exercise supervision and control over employees of the former working in the block.

The Panchayat Samitis at the block level in

Maharashtra are expected to function as agencies of the Zilla Parishad. This provides for a functional linking between the Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samitis in the district. The structural linking is facilitated in three ways:

(i) the councillors of the Zilla Parishad are ex officio members of the Panchayat Samiti in which their constituencies are located,

(ii) chairmen of the Panchayat Samitis are ex officio members of the Zilla Parishad, and

(iii) it is prescribed in the statute that it is the responsibility of the Panchayat Samitis to forward quarterly to the Zilla Parishad a summary of proceedings of their meetings.

Education Extension Officers are responsible for execution of development schemes in primary education and inspection and supervision of primary schools and village libraries. The Education Officers and Deputy Education Officers or Block Education Officers have overall control of inspection and supervision of primary schools.

Educational Planning under Zilla Parishads

The Zilla Parishads were set up to promote planned development of districts by utilizing to the greatest extent possible local resources and by preparing annual and long term plans keeping in view the plans prepared by Panchayat Samitis. Under Section 100 of the Maharashtra Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samitis Act (1961), various functions of the Zilla Parishad are given. Some of these include establishment,

management, maintenance and visiting of primary schools including grants to aided schools but not the laying down of syllabi or the prescription of textbooks. The Zilla Parishads can also establish and manage their own secondary schools. The functions of grants to aided non- government schools and their inspection and visiting are entrusted to the Zilla Parishad, through the Education Committee and the Education Officer.

The main source of finance for a Zilla Parishad is grants from the State Government. However, Zilla Parishads can raise funds by way of cess on land revenue, water rates, pilgrim taxes, rents, profits, contributions from private agencies, proceeds of tolls on roads and bridges, licence fees on brokers, commission agents, marketing fees, fees on registration of animals sold in the market, forest revenue and so on.

The Zilla Parishad can formulate its own schemes to meet the needs of the district. It has full powers to decide about location of new schools, upgrading of existing schools, deciding about the schools where additional classrooms are to be constructed, and organization of inservice training programmes for teachers. It is responsible for developmental programmes pertaining to education although, in certain financial matters, the Education Committee can decide about new programmes without placing the proposals before the full Zilla Parishad. The grants received from the State Government are utilized for the programmes approved by the State Government. Zilla Parishad resources are utilized to supplement the programmes approved by the State Government and can also be spent on innovative programmes undertaken by the State Government.

Since most of the development departments work under the Zilla Parishad, cooperation from these departments for educational activities can be easily sought. For example, coordination between the Agriculture and the Education Departments is useful for nonformal and adult education programmes. Similarly, educational development is promoted by coordination between the Health and Education Departments for the medical check-up of students, by coordination between the Public Works and Education Departments for the construction of school buildings and teachers' quarters, and by coordination between the Education and Rural Development Departments.

Implementation of the various programmes is reviewed in monthly coordination meetings of the officers of the Zilla Parishad. The office bearers provide feedback from the public about implementation of the schemes. Sometimes, joint meetings of two committees are held in order to have effective interaction between the members of the two subcommittees.

The District Planning and Development Council

An evaluation conducted by a Committee appointed by the State government in 1971 showed that conscious and systematic planning in the local sector was lacking. In 1972 the State government introduced a number of measures to strengthen planning at the district level and adopted the principle of district planning since the commencement of the Fifth Five Year Plan in 1974-5. The underlying philosophy of district planning is not only that every district should get a certain plan allocation, decided on the basis of certain parameters, but a broad cross section of the representatives of the people should have a say as to how this plan allocation should be spent in the district. In the modified set, district

level schemes outside the purview of the Zilla Parishads were also brought under district planning. This new body was called the District Planning and Development Council (DPDC).

The justification for constituting a separate DPDC, when organizations in the form of Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis responsible for planning and implementation already existed in the state, may be questioned. However, it may be said that the spheres of action of Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis were limited to such schemes and programmes as were entrusted to them. Apart from these activities, some activities were still retained in the State sector which also had direct impact on the development of the district as a whole. Besides, programmes of various financing institutions, urban local bodies and statutory corporations/boards constituted by the State Government had to be coordinated with the development programmes drawn up by Zilla Parishads. There was no single agency which could be entrusted with the function of bringing about coordination between various agencies responsible for development of the district.

a) Organization

The designated Minister of the district is the Chairman of the DPDC, thus providing the Council with higher status and also their plans with greater weight with the State planning department. The District Collector is the ex officio secretary of the DPDC. Involvement of the President of the District Central Cooperative Bank and representatives of other financing agencies helps in getting cooperation of credit agencies in the district, as many local economic activities, particularly those intended for rural development and for the benefit of weaker

sections, need credit assistance. Inclusion of members of the legislature, Parliament and Council and the president of the Zilla Parishad seems to be intended to effect some sort of people's cooperation indirectly. Other non-official members, numbering thirteen, are usually well known social workers and experts in different sectors of development.

Meeting quarterly, the functions of the DPDC are:

(i) to ensure coordinated action by various implementing agencies at the district level including Zilla Parishads,

(ii) to give guidance to various implementing agencies at the district level in regard to preparation and implementation of the Five Year and Annual Plans,

(iii) to approve Five Year and Annual Plans of the district, and,

(iv) to review, from time to time, the implementation of Five Year and Annual Plans and make recommendations to the State Government on their behalf.

As the DPDC, being a large body, cannot meet often, the day to day tasks of plan formulation and implementation are entrusted to a smaller Executive Committee consisting of the designated Minister of the district as Chairman, the President of the Zilla Parishad, District Collector, Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad, two representatives of the DPDC, Manager of the District Central Cooperative Bank, Manager of a leading bank, mayor or president of the largest municipal council, and the District Planning Officer (who also acts as the ex officio

secretary of the Executive Committee).

Required to meet at least once in a month, the Executive transacts the following business:

(i) consideration of the monthly progress reports on implementation of the district annual plan,
(ii) identification of reasons for shortfalls in expenditure, as also for physical achievements or lack of progress,
(iii) suggesting measures for expeditious implementation of the programmes and remedial measures required where progress is lacking,
(iv) consideration of new schemes or works for inclusion in the district annual plans by adjustment within the budgeted outlay of the district,
(v) consideration of excess requirements or savings indicated by the implementing officer and proposed reappropriations for approval of the DPDC.

b) Allocation of Plan Outlays

Classification of schemes by state and district levels was an important step which enabled the state government to quantify the total plan outlay on each district. In order to decide the allocation of plan funds among the districts on a rational basis, the state government adopted the following formula:

Total population (60%)
Urban population (5%)
Scheduled castes and tribes population (5%)
Backwardness in:
(i) agriculture (5%)
(ii) irrigation (5%)
(iii) communications (5%)
(iv) industries (5%)
Special problems:
(i) drought prone area (3%)
(ii) coastal district (1.5%)
(iii) forest area (1.5%)
Unallocated amount for meeting special problems (5%)

A firm resource ceiling for each district has helped in making the entire district planning exercise feasible, realistic and operational. The district planners are now compelled to think in terms of priorities.

Three measures have been introduced by the State Government for effective functioning of the DPDC's:

(i) DPDC's have been given powers to reappropriate savings within the district, subject to certain limitations provided in the guidelines by the State,

(ii) according to the new procedure, grants are released directly to the implementing officers, instead of through the heads of the departments at the state level. This has served to cut down delays in the percolation of funds to the district level.

(iii) the implementing officers are accountable to the DPDC for implementation at the district level. The Executive Committee of the DPDC reviews the progress of the schemes during its monthly meetings. The directions given by the Executive Committee have to be complied with by the implementing officers. This has helped to improve performance of the implementing officers.

c) Tribal Area Sub-Plan

The Constitution of India grants special protection to tribal people and tribal regions. In Maharashtra, the tribal population is 7.62%, concentrated in thirteen districts, 75 blocks and 6,250 villages.

The main objectives of the Tribal Areas Sub-Plan are:

(i) to narrow the gap between the level of development of sub-plan areas and other areas of the district,
(ii) to improve the standard and quality of life of the tribal community,
(iii) to tackle the important problems facing the tribal people, and
(iv) to eliminate exploitation, speed up the process for social and economic development, build up inner strength of the people and improve their organizational capacity.

There is a special tribal sub-plan Executive Committee of the DPDC, constituted in each of the tribal sub-plan areas. Most of the schemes which are

being implemented in the district in other areas are also implemented in tribal sub-plan areas. But, in addition, special schemes have been introduced for the educational development of the tribals. Some of these include book banks, special facilities to tribal students by way of stipends, sports competition for tribal boys, ashram schools and residential primary schools.

Procedure for Educational Planning at District Level

a) Scope

The criterion for determining whether a scheme is a state level scheme or a district level scheme is determined by the areas which are to benefit by the scheme. Most of the elementary and secondary education schemes are at district level. Arts, science and commerce colleges and polytechnics are district level schemes as only the district in which these institutions are located derives benefit from them. Universities and institutions of professional education like engineering and medical colleges are state level schemes as more than one district benefits from these schemes.

In most cases, the implementing officers for district level programmes are district level officers. However, with a few schemes, even state level agencies may be responsible for implementing district level programmes. For example, the Director or Higher Education at state level is responsible for district level schemes like development of arts, science and commerce colleges and the Director of Technical Education for the development of polytechnics in a

district. The Director of the State Council of Educational Research and Training may be the implementing officer for district level schemes like inservice training programmes for teachers in the district, or undertaking an action research project in the district.

The State Government, through the Director of Education, sends guidelines to the district level implementing officers for formulation of plan proposals. For the preparation of the annual plan, these instructions are normally sent in July or August of the preceding year. The implementing officers formulate schemes taking into consideration local needs and aspirations within the framework of guidelines issued by the State Government and submit them to the District Planning Unit. The Planning Unit in each district, under the overall charge of the Collector and consisting of a Planning Officer, one Statistical Assistant, and one Research Assistant, acts as a secretariat of the DPDC.

The schemes are then put before the DPDC. Before taking a decision, the schemes are discussed thoroughly in a subcommittee nominated by the DPDC for this purpose and informed about the tentative ceiling for education so that priorities can be fixed. After the plan is finalized by the sub-committee, it is submitted to the DPDC for approval. The representatives of the Planning Department also attend the meetings of the DPDC with a view to providing clarification whenever necessary. The annual plans, once finalized, are sent to the State Government.

On receipt of the annual plans by the State Government, a second round of discussions between the State Government and the DPDC is held, chaired by the

Planning Minister. These discussions are attended by all Heads of Departments at the State level, chairman of the DPDC, the District Collector and Planning Officer. This procedure has helped in integrating the district plan with the State plan without neglecting local needs. In order to achieve effective coordination with other departments, representatives of the Health, Rural Development, Work and other departments are also invited to attend.

The State Government then releases grants directly to the implementing officers, instead of releasing them through the Heads of Departments or Controlling Officers. Powers for the re-appropriation of funds have also been delegated to the District Planning and Development Councils.

b) Determination of Expenditure

Four categories of development schemes are visualized as included in the plan:

(i) new development schemes on capital account,
(ii) new development schemes on revenue account,
(iii) development schemes which are part of the preceding plan but are to be continued, and
(iv) development schemes which represent additions to, or extensions of, institutions or establishments which already exist and are part of the normal maintenance responsibility of the State, or which, after completion during the preceding plan, should be deemed to become part of the future normal

maintenance responsibility of the Government.

Items which should be treated as committed or non-plan expenditure are based on the following considerations:

(i) maintenance expenditure of development schemes completed in the preceding plan period constitutes committed expenditure. Only expenditure on additions and extensions of programmes or establishments during the plan period should constitute plan expenditure,

(ii) maintenance expenditure on existing institutions,

(iii) in case of recurrent activities, the expenditure of headquarters' staff,

(iv) maintenance expenditure on existing research schemes. Only additional research schemes to be undertaken during the plan period should be treated as plan expenditure,

(v) grants-in-aid up to the level attained at the end of the past plan period would constitute committed expenditure. Only increases in grants-in-aid over that level would qualify for plan expenditures in the next plan,

(vi) grants-in-aid for ad hoc outlays, except for maintenance purposes and for expansion of existing new buildings and equipment for research and educational

institutions, would form part of the plan expenditure,

(vii) stipends, fellowships and scholarships at the end of the previous plan period would constitute committed expenditure. Only net increases in the value of these stipends, fellowships and scholarships would constitute plan expenditure.

c) Implementation and Review

The progress of implementation of schemes is reviewed every month by the Executive Committee of the DPDC and quarterly by the DPDC. The DPDC is empowered to make necessary re-appropriations subject to the guidelines given by the State Government. The controlling officers also review monthly and quarterly progress of implementation, while the Chief Executive Officer and the Regional Deputy Director of Education review the plan progress in monthly coordination meetings. The Regional Deputy Director and the officers in the Directorate of Education are expected to visit the plan schemes so that implementation is reviewed when the schemes are in operation.

There is no system for regular evaluation of various plan schemes, although a few have been carried out on an ad hoc basis. The Adult Education Programme, for example, has been evaluated by Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, while the Nonformal Education Programme and the Programme of School Complexes have been evaluated by the State Institute of Education, Pune.

A Critical Appraisal

a) District Development Planning

The experiment of district planning in Maharashtra is a combination of successes as well as shortcomings. However, the State Government is engaged in solving these problems by trial and error methods.

One of the criticisms of the planning machinery at the district level is that, in the present set-up, involvement of Panchayati Raj institutions below the Zilla Parishad level does not take place in a direct manner. In Zilla Parishads, public representatives at lower levels also get an opportunity to participate in planning. Although, from the way the DPDC is constituted, this criticism may appear to be valid, in actual practice sub-committees formed to examine the plans ensure that views of the important citizens are taken into consideration. Even those persons who may not be members of the DPDC can be coopted on to the subcommittees on education.

According to the constitution of the DPDC, the designated Minister of the District is the Chairman of the Council. This has helped in giving higher status to the DPDC. It has also enabled the DPDC not only to have an idea of the thinking and policy of the Government on various issues but also to convey to the Government, through their Chairman, the aspirations and needs of the districts.

Another criticism of the DPDC's is that the district plans are formulated by consensus in the meetings, and not by objective analysis and study. The district planning staff neither conduct any studies of their own nor do any impact analysis or evaluation of ongoing programmes. They do not have expertise in

this area. This criticism is valid to a large extent. It is suggested that the planning staff, as well as the implementing officers, should be trained in these techniques so that they can undertake these responsibilities.

It is envisaged that the DPDC should formulate some innovative schemes in order to meet special needs of the district. However, in terms of resources, there is little scope left to the DPDC for the planning of new schemes. The district plans have to provide for ongoing programmes and inevitable expansion. This does not permit them to make any drastic alterations in the priorities and schemes.

In Maharashtra, the role of voluntary agencies in educational development is well known. But their efforts are not integrated with the district plan. It is necessary to devise some mechanism to involve the voluntary agencies in the educational planning of the district.

In spite of these difficulties, there are a number of strengths of the system. Some of the districts have been able to introduce new schemes, however meagre the amount provided for them may be, to meet local needs. Central residential schools for tribal children in Thane and Gadchiroli districts and special coaching classes for tribal students are some examples. Moreover, since the implementing officers are involved in formulation of the plan, there are better chances of implementing the programmes effectively.

b) District Educational Planning

Since the inception of Zilla Parishads, there has been a marked improvement in quantitative aspects of

primary education such as the number of primary schools and enrolment. Female enrolment in particular has increased considerably, and there has also been a remarkable increase in the coverage of pupils belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes.

The most important achievement as a result of democratic decentralization of educational planning and administration in Maharashtra has been the more ready cooperation of the village communities. This is particularly so in regard to the construction of schools buildings, provision of other facilities such as school gardens, repairs to school buildings, provision of furniture and equipment. The local community has become more vigilant about the provision of school facilities in their villages and about the regular attendance of teachers as well as their standard of teaching in the schools. Awareness of the people regarding the significance of primary education is one of the major gains.

One of the objectives of associating local bodies in educational administration was to bring local knowledge to bear upon the solution of problems. In this regard, Zilla Parishad educational administration has achieved notable success. Every Zilla Parishad has implemented some special educational programmes suited to its local needs. The Zilla Parishads have been able to make their own contributions, however small, to innovative experiments. Awards to ideal teachers and ideal schools, organizing block level and district level competitions in various cultural activities, prizes for clean and beautiful schools, short term orientation courses for teachers, establishment of residential schools for talented students in the rural areas, headmaster-cum-supervisors, central residential schools for tribal students encouraging

students to appear for scholarship examinations, and other competitive examinations, are some of the activities that have been undertaken by the Zilla Parishads.

Another advantage of Panchayat Raj institutions which has been noted relates to inter-departmental coordination. In Maharashtra, the District Public Health Officer is expected to carry out medical checkups of students in primary schools. Construction of school buildings is entrusted to the Works Department. A review of such programmes is taken in the coordination meetings of the officers of the Zilla Parishad and the concerned subcommittees.

Apart from the advantages, the system has brought with it some problems. One of the most important is the frequent transfers of teachers. Due to fear of transfer, they become involved in politics, and for this reason alone teachers' associations have shown their dissatisfaction with decentralized educational administration. The Chairman of Panchayat Samiti at the block level and the President of the Zilla Parishad at the district level are to be consulted for transfers within the block and out of the block respectively. Sometimes, an excess number of teachers is posted in schools on the main road, whereas in the interior areas there is a shortage of teachers. Subject requirements of teachers for individual schools are also sometimes neglected, which naturally affects the quality of education.

Many times there is political interference in the work of the officials. The non-officials usually pressurize the district and block level educational authorities to take decisions according to their own desires, particularly in the case of opening of schools or divisions.

The Panchayati Raj institution envisaged a dual control under which a technical administrator was to look after technical aspects and the general administrator the administrative aspects. In Maharashtra, at the district level, the Education Officer who is the head of the education department works under the Chief Executive Officer. At the block level, the Education Extension Officer had to work under the Block Development Officer until 1976. This sort of arrangement resulted in loss of identity of the educational administrators. In this set-up, education is regarded as one of the development activities under the Panchayati Raj institution. In spheres other than education, some kind of rapprochement has been brought about between the generalist administrators and the technical administrators. One of the reasons for less than amicable relations between the technical administrators and the generalist administrators is that the work done by him is assessed on the basis of his performance in all development sectors at large. He remains somewhat unaffected by his performance in any single sector like education. So long as the work done by the generalist administrator is not assessed partly on the basis of the targets in respect to educational programmes, this relationship is not likely to improve, particularly at the block level. Since the generalist administrator has to look after a number of development programmes, even the education extension officers and the teachers are involved in programmes like family planning, small saving schemes, distribution of seeds, recoveries of loans etc. This results in negligence towards educational programmes. To avoid this difficulty, the government of Maharashtra has withdrawn control by the block development officers over education extension officers and placed them directly under the block education officer. The post of block education

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officer has been specially created for this purpose.

Since 1983-4, there have been three Education Officers to look after primary, secondary and adult education. All the three officers are of equivalent status. This has created the problem of coordination among these officers who belong to the same department. Now there is a demand that one of these posts may be upgraded to Deputy Director of Education to coordinate the working of all the officers of the Education Department at the district level.

Conclusion

Both the Zilla Parishads and the DPDC's are strong bodies, entrusted with the function of planning for developmental activities at the district level. Main differences between these two agencies are:

(i) Zilla Parishads are statutory bodies formed under the act, whereas DPDC's are non-statutory bodies formed by administrative orders of the State Government,

(ii) Zilla Parishads can plan developmental activities entrusted to them in rural areas in the district. On the other hand, DPDC's are responsible for planning all developmental activities in the district, including those entrusted to the Zilla Parishads,

(iii) DPDC's are responsible for formulation of plans and their monitoring, whereas the Zilla Parishads are responsible for both

formulation and execution of plans,

(iv) DPDC's are mainly advisory bodies, although their suggestions are binding on the implementing officers. They do not have their own funds, the main responsibility being to allocate the plan funds received by the State Government for the district among various development departments for implementation of the approved plan schemes. They do not have their own staff. On the other hand, the Zilla Parishads, being administrative bodies, have their own staff and can raise funds to implement both plan and non-plan programmes entrusted to them,

(v) Zilla Parishads have reached to the lowest level in the district, namely the village. DPDC's, on the other hand, find it difficult to involve public representatives below the district level in the planning process. DPDC's are trying to minimize this drawback by coopting members on to various sub-committees which have been formed under the Chairmanship of the MLA concerned and Block Development Officer as the Secretary. However, block level committees mainly perform the monitoring function and are not involved in the planning process.

Although these experiments are institutionalized in the State, they are far from static phenomena. Difficulties do arise from time to time, but solutions are found and past procedures modified. The main reason for success of these experiments is the political will and the cultural environment prevailing in the State. The work of voluntary agencies and social reformers, and a high level of community participation in all developmental activities, have helped to create an environment conducive to the functioning of democratic bodies like Zilla Parishads and DPDC's.

The Maharashtra experiment may not be totally replicable in other States, but a number of lessons can be learnt. Decentralization is a gradual process that should be applied in stages. Every region can be made to evolve a locally suitable model. Perseverance and continued commitment are however a sine qua non for any such measure.

ACTION RESEARCH ON IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATION: A Case Study of Micro-Level Planning and Management[1]

Satya Bhushan
Brahm Prakash
Yash Aggarwal
Pramila Menon

Since the beginning of the planned development era, the removal of disparities in the field of education, especially at the basal level, has been recognized as one of the major objectives of educational planning. For achieving this objective, the removal of adult illiteracy and the universalization of elementary education have to be accorded top priority. During earlier five year plans in India, various efforts have been made in this direction. Low levels of literacy in the country were seen as the result of uneven spread of schooling facilities and it was hoped, therefore, that the expansion of schooling, particularly in rural areas, would bring about the desired results. Specific attention was paid to the spread of education among deprived social groups as well as the backward and inaccessible regions. About 95% of the rural population are now served by schools either within their own habitations or within a

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[1] *This work has greatly benefited from "Action Research to Study Implementation Strategies in Educational Planning and Administration", a paper circulated at the NIEPA Regional Workshop on Micro-Level Planning and Management, 14 October - 2 November 1985; and "Educational Planning at the Block Level - An Exercise on Punhana Block of Gurgaon District" by D Esther, supervised by Dr Y P Aggarwal*

walking distance of 1.6 kilometers. Physical accessibility to schooling facilities is, therefore, no longer a major hindrance to the spread of education.

But lack of physical access to schools is not the only factor hindering educational development. The causes of low enrolment are deeply rooted in the socio-economic structure of the various regions. It is in this context that an integrated approach to planning acquires special significance. Such a strategy may be operationalized through micro-level planning and management with active community involvement. With effective involvement of the community, organizational inadequacies can be identified and suitable delivery mechanisms at the grass roots level can be applied.

Unlike other sectors of development, education has some specific characteristics which do not leave much choice in terms of locational decisions, and the micro-level planning approach is particularly necessary for implementation schemes. Moreover, these schemes can be made the fulcrum of development for desired changes in other social and economic aspects. The Action Research for Implementation Strategies in Education (ARISE) covers comprehensive programmes of formal and nonformal education in a cluster of 20 selected villages of the Punhana block. It seeks to examine and critically analyse various implementation strategies so that the goals of education policy can be achieved along with socio-economic development.

Objectives and Rationale of ARISE

The major objective of the project is to evolve through experimentation a comprehensive integrated programme of development in the selected cluster of

villages. More specifically, the objectives of the project are to:

(i) achieve universal elementary education and the eradication of illiteracy through community involvement,

(ii) involve the community through participation in identifying the problems, in the formulation of plans and in the implementation of strategies,

(iii) involve the community in monitoring and evaluating various programmes of educational and socio-economic development,

(iv) establish close linkages and coordination with other voluntary and development agencies by identifying the educational components of their programmes and generating a general social demand for education,

(v) critically examine the existing administrative infrastructure to identify alternative measures by which community participation in the decision making process is ensured.

These objectives cannot be achieved without the active participation and involvement of the community. A suitable entry point has to be identified so that the community finds the programmes useful and beneficial to them. A positive response from the community, coupled with the efforts of local officials, can make the desired impact. Once the community starts taking interest in the development

projects, then the follow-up action acquires greater significance. Only a process of gradual transformation coupled with suitable strategies which are acceptable to the community may help in bringing about improvement in supervision, reducing dropout rate and creating linkages with other development agencies, especially with those departments where such linkages have not been effective so far.

It has been observed that some development programmes undertaken by outside agencies create a dependency or parasitic culture which is not conducive to development particularly of the weaker sections. Project ARISE follows a different strategy. It does not envisage additional financial inputs but is intended to focus on the optimum use of the available inputs by bringing about awareness in the community. It is expected that awareness about different development projects itself will generate demand for a number of related and useful activities. Therefore, education can be considered as one of the agents of social change.

From the education standpoint, the project seeks to raise awareness amongst parents so that children in the 6-14 age group who are not attending school, or have dropped out without completing the elementary stage, are brought back to the fold of education. It also envisages creating awareness about the benefits of functional literacy in daily living. Achievement of these objectives would create a climate conducive to further community participation and self-reliance. Twenty contiguous villages have been selected for studying the possibility of achieving universal elementary education through community involvement as a supportive mechanism to the existing administrative set-up (see Figure 1).

SELECTED VILLAGES
FOR
PROJECT 'ARISE' IN
PUNHANA BLOCK

Figure 1

Socio-Economic Profile of the Punhana Block

Punhana block is one of the most backward areas in Gurgaon District (Haryana State) in spite of its nearness to Delhi and the industrially advanced region of Faridabad. Low levels of educational and socio economic development have continued in spite of the fact that the state government has launched various incentives and schemes of development. The people of the area, because of ignorance, poverty and lack of communication, are not even aware of many developmental programmes. Though there are a number of agencies operating in the rural areas, the approach being followed in all the programmes is sectoral.

Punhana block is located towards the south-eastern corner of Gurgaon district. It is bounded by the block of Firozepur Zhirka on the west, Faridabad district on the north and east, and Bharatpur district of Rajasthan on the south (Figure 2).[2]

There are 94 villages in the Punhana block. It does not have any town or city. The population of the block according to the 1981 census was 1.12 lakhs (or 112,000) which accounted for about 5% of the district population. The population growth rate from 1971-81 was about 2.7% which is much higher than the national average of 2.24%. The sex ratio is 894 females for every 1000 males. However, there are seven villages where the number of females is greater than the number of males. Besides social factors, such an atypical situation may be due to the non-availability

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[2] *This discussion refers to the educational block of Punhana. In the district of Gurgaon, the boundaries of educational and administrative blocks are not coterminous for some blocks.*

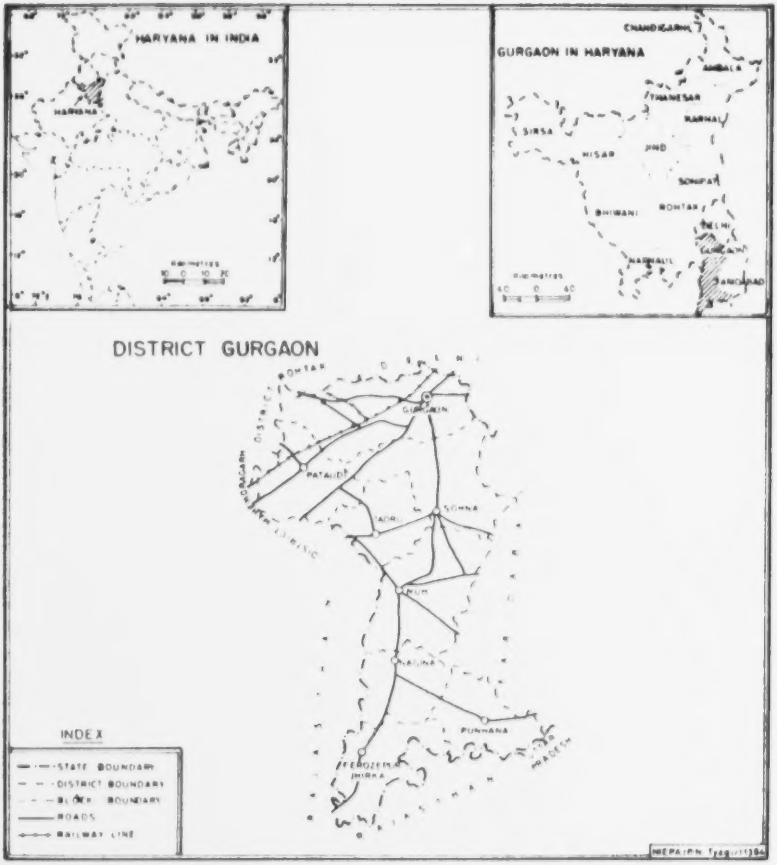
HARYANA IN INDIA
GURGAON IN HARYANA
CHANDIGARH
AMBALA
THANESAR
KARNAL
SIRSA
HISAR
JIND
SONIPAT
BHIWANI
ROHTAK
DELHI
GURGAON
NARNAUL
FARIDABAD
DISTRICT GURGAON
ROHTAK
PATAUDI
SOHNA
PALWAL
NUH
NAGINA
PUNHANA
FEROZEPUR JHIRKA
INDEX
STATE BOUNDARY
DISTRICT BOUNDARY
BLOCK BOUNDARY
ROADS
RAILWAY LINE

Figure 2

of work in these villages, particularly because of the low level of agricultural development.

The block does not have a high concentration of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe populations, being about 8.5%, fairly distributed in all villages (except eleven where it is less than 8%). As this group is usually socially and economically backward, their presence is associated with poor development. There is a need to bring such populations up to par with other groups and to integrate them with the mainstream of society. In the case of Punhana block, other dominating communities are also well below the poverty line.

The settlement pattern is skewed and the population quite unevenly distributed among villages. It varies from about 7000 in Singer village to as low as about one dozen in Kherli Tar village. It has been found that 4.7% of the total inhabited villages have a population of less than 100, 61.7% between 100 and 1000, 20% between 1000 and 2000, 7.5% between 2000 and 4000, and 3.6% more than 4000. The villages with large populations generally lie along the border of the neighbouring district of Faridabad, which happens to be one of the most industrialized districts of Haryana state. The concentration of population near an industrialized area indicates linkages for the supply of cheap labour on the one hand, and the availability of other items of subsistence like food, milk and other household goods.

Agriculture and associated activities are the major occupations in this under-developed block. The soil is not good for cultivation as there are many sand dunes and hilly tracts. Only 20-25% of the net sown area is being used for double cropping. The use of modern agricultural techniques is not common and

consequently the productivity per hectare has been very low.

Under development of the block is both cause and effect of the low (26.4%) work force participation rates (compared with about 35% for the country as a whole). A significant implication of this is that the dependency ratio is very high, with the number of earners per family very small. The situation is exacerbated by high birth rates and lack of gainful employment opportunities even in the primary sector due to the primitive nature of the technology. Low wage levels for adults and the prevalence of child labour are other indicators of under development, while lack of adequate infrastructure also influences the development of the secondary and tertiary sectors of the village economy. Moreover, the presence of large numbers of children in the population increases the pressure on maternal and child health services, nutritional services for pre-school children, primary and secondary school services etc.

Sex-wise break up of the work force distribution reveals the lack of women's participation in work (about 2%). They are usually employed as agricultural labourers. The low participation of women in the work force results not only from the low level of development in the region but also from social factors, for the community dominating the region is not very favourably disposed to the participation of women in any type of economic activity.

The sectoral distribution of workers reveals that nearly 78% of them are engaged in primary activities like agriculture, livestock, forestry and allied activities. Secondary activities like household industry, manufacturing and construction absorb only 6.5% of the workers and the remaining 15.3% are

engaged in tertiary activities. Most of the people employed in the tertiary sector are small shopkeepers and artisans. The occupational structure, therefore, indicates the existence of large scale disguised unemployment in agriculture and consequently low per capita labour productivity.

Educational Development in Punhana

The position with respect to educational development is not much different. The block records a literacy level of 11.8% (against 35% for the district). In 70 villages, out of a total of 84, the percentage of literates is less than 20%. In as many as 32 villages, there is not a single literate female. If one looks at other levels of education, the position is far more serious. Many studies have established that female literacy is a critical factor not only for the educational development of the family, but also helps in raising the quality of life generally. This clearly brings out the urgency of implementing an educational programme for the block as a whole with immediate attention to female literacy.

In spite of the constitutional directive for free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years, many children in the block in the relevant age group do not attend school. The dropout rate, particularly among girls, is very high. At an early age of seven or eight, many children start sharing the domestic responsibilities especially when the parents have to go to the field or attend to work at other places. In such circumstances, these children are not able to go to full-time conventional schools. Moreover, the general impression is that the type of education being imparted in school is not very relevant to daily work.

Low levels of enrolment are also due to the socio-cultural ethos of the community dominating the study area. The community is guided by certain religious beliefs which greatly influence their life styles and the approach to daily living. The Meos, who dominate the cluster of selected villages, are the inhabitants of the Mewat region comprising the hilly terrains of Gurgaon district and the adjoining districts of Alwar and Bharatpur of the state of Rajasthan. The whole community is divided into 12 pals and 52 gotras which are reflected in the day to day work. Marriages take place within the community, and inter-caste marriages do not occur. The inter-gotra marriages help in maintaining blood relationship within the community, in the long run sustaining the communal solidarity which is considered to be very essential for their security. The distinctiveness of Meos traditions is also portrayed in their names.

The community, predominantly Muslim, is known for the initiative of the men folk but the role of women is normally restricted to household activities. They do not attach much importance to education in general, nor to the education of women in particular. The community has continued to follow traditional patterns and has not been affected by modern technology or the new life styles of the neighbouring affluent areas. The orthodox attitude of the parents and their reluctance to send the girls outside their homes, followed by the tradition of early marriage, are some of the reasons for low levels of education among the girls. Since most of the schools have men teachers, the young girls are not prepared to come to school. The problem becomes serious as women teachers for the village schools are not easily available. These factors have been so deeply entrenched in the culture of the community that only a shift in their

outlook can be achieved only gradually.

The Meos have a strong faith in their religious traditions. A large number still revere Hindu gods and goddesses side by side while believing in the god as enshrined in Islam. Local deities are assumed to be responsible for diseases such as smallpox and fever of long duration. A system of demonology still haunts the minds of most Meos. In the modern world, where every phenomenon has some scientific explanation, the Meos still attribute most of happenings to the will of God. Whenever bad things happen which are beyond their understanding, they attribute them to evil spirits.

Unlike Muslims in general, whose feasts of Ramazan and Bakrid and Muharram follow a purely lunar cycle independent of the seasons, the Meos are strongly attached to other seasonal festivals such as Holi, Dussehra, Teej, Chhat etc. Seasonal melas are marked by the presence of large groups of Meos and Meonis, mingling easily with men and women of Hindu communities.

Baseline Survey of the Selected Area

The existing organizational structure was utilized to assist in formulating strategies to achieve the target of universal elementary education. NIEPA organized a five day workshop for headmasters, government officials, gram sewaks, sarpanches of gram panchayats and other village functionaries working in Gurgaon district.

Discussions centred on themes such as school and community, inter-departmental cooperation, adult and nonformal education, special drives for UEE, and education and rural development. Participants felt

that education should be reoriented and closely linked with the needs and aspirations of the people and that strategies should be evolved accordingly. Improvement of basic amenities in schools in backward areas and involvement of the local community in the planning process were other suggestions.

As a follow-up action, a meeting of 21 sarpanches, heads of primary schools and block level officers was held at Punhana. It was decided in the meeting that, to begin with, in each village a Village Education Committee should be constituted in which the headmaster of the school and the sarpanch of the village should be actively involved. It was also agreed that base line data would be collected through a survey of each village. In about three months time, all the Village Education Committees were constituted and with their assistance the survey work was also completed. Most of the respondents cooperated with investigators as no sensitive information was sought.

The design of the survey was very simple, all the villages being ordered according to descending illiteracy patterns. Two way classification tables were constructed based on key variables such as population, sex, age, family size, occupation, income etc on the one hand, and the levels of literacy on the other. Each key variable was further sub-classified into mutually exclusive classes. Similarly, rank ordering of each village was done with respect to these key variables for different strata of the society (for example, scheduled caste illiteracy percentage and non-scheduled caste illiteracy percentage). Significantly different ranks along these two dimensions would indicate the disparities due to social stratification.

On the basis of the identification of such

imbalances, many conclusions were drawn for formulating implementation strategies in the selected villages. For example, Godhola village ranks first in the percentage illiteracy amongst the non-scheduled caste population but thirteenth in the percentage of illiteracy of the scheduled caste population. This implies that the target population for literacy in Godhola village mainly consists of non-scheduled castes. This difference in ranking calls for a different set of implementation strategies as compared with the villages where the differences between the two types of ranks are not very significant. Identification of such target groups is a major prerequisite of micro-level planning.

The second level of analysis pertained to identification of illiteracy patterns by sex. In the third stage of analysis, illiteracy patterns were studied with respect to the caste variable.

a) Illiteracy Patterns in the Selected Villages

One of the major aims of the data analysis was to assign priorities among the villages for purposes of promotion of literacy. It was, therefore, essential to measure the magnitude of the task involved. The villages were ranked on the basis of the absolute number of illiterates, as well as the percentage of illiteracy. The absolute number is necessary to estimate the extent and the magnitude of the efforts involved, whereas the relative position of different villages can be compared only through the percentage analysis. For example, Bisru village ranks very high on both counts. The highest priority for literacy promotion has thus to be assigned to the villages of Bisru, Godhola, Tussaini and Pemakhera. The second order of priorities are to be assigned to the villages of Dallabas, Shahchokha, Mubarikpur,

Fardari, Naharpur and Jaroli. The remaining villages of Badli, Raipur and Tundlaka are given third order of priority.

b) Illiteracy Patterns by Socio-Economic Variables

(i) Sex

The first priority in promoting female literacy should go to the villages of Gobinspur, Naharpur and Jaroli. On the other hand, males in Bisru, Nakanpur, Pemakhera and Bhurivaki need to be made more literate. Once the disparities between males and females are reduced, efforts should be made to raise the general level of both sexes. In Tussaini, Godhola and Shamsabad, improvement in both male and female literacy levels should be given top consideration.

(ii) Caste

Data indicate that in Godhola, Pemakhera, Shamsabad, Nakanpur, Dallabas and Jaroli, the percentage of illiteracy is significantly higher among nonscheduled castes than among the scheduled castes. In Chandanki, Rahira, Patakpur, Shahchokha and Mubarikpur, it is the scheduled caste population which needs more attention.

(iii) Age

It was found that the villages of Shamsabad, Pemakhera, Nakanpur and Jaroliare are educationally the most backward in terms of the 6-11 years age group. With regard to the 12-14 age group, the villages of Gobinspur, Tussaini and Chandanki are educationally the most backward. In villages like Patakpur, Raipur, Badli, Mubarikpur, Andhaki, Bhurivaki and Rahira, the disparity in levels of

literacy in the two age groups is not wide and hence efforts should be directed towards both age groups.

(iv) Income per Capita

Whereas high levels of education are normally assumed to be associated with higher incomes, the data on literacy and per capita income in this study do not reveal any clear relationship. This may be because levels of education and agricultural development are generally very low and the inter-village variations are also not large. In the villages of Bisru, Dallabas, Daroli, Pemakhera, Shamsabad and Tussaini, the illiteracy percentages are high and the annual per capita income is also high. Further detailed investigations are needed to draw firm conclusions.

c) Illiteracy by Occupation

Four occupational categories account for the majority of the workforce in the study area: cultivation, manual labour, service sector, and shopkeeping.

(i) Cultivators

In Bisru, Pemakhera, Tussaini, Nakanpur, Fardari and Godhola, both the number and percentages of illiterate cultivators are very high, so that promotion of their literacy must be given a high priority. In Mubarikpur and Badli, the number of cultivator illiterates is high, though their percentage is relatively low. Agriculture could serve as an entry point for these villages.

(ii) Manual Labourers

The number and percentages of illiterate manual labourers are high in Bisru, Godhola and Tussaini. In

Pemakhera, Dallabas, Shahchokha and Mubarikpur, the number of manual labourer illiterates is high but their percentages are relatively low. In Chandanki, Jaroli, Naharpur and Shamsabad the percentage is high but the numbers relatively low.

(iii) Service Workers

The number of illiterates in the service sector is very high in Bisru. In Mubarikpur, Pemakhera and Fardari, there is an imbalance in the rankings corresponding to the numbers and percentages of illiterates. In all other villages, the numbers of illiterates in this category are very low.

(iv) Shopkeepers

The number of illiterate shopkeepers is very high in Nakanpur and Bisru. In Shahchokha, Patakpur, Naharpur and Raipur, the number of illiterate shopkeepers is between 10 and 30. Overall, the percentages of illiterate shopkeepers carry little weight as the numbers are very small.

Implementation of the Project

a) Orientation and Involvement

(i) Field Staff

A four day training programme was organized at NIEPA to help field staff understand strategies of mobilizing village communities in the implementation of various developmental schemes. It was considered necessary, for example, to provide training in the preparation of smokeless chulha and the formulation of a village education plan, on cooperation of voluntary agencies, and on rural technology.

The approach followed was participatory, with field staff highlighting the specific problems of each village which they had earlier visited. Discussions held that involvement of the community in decision making, and the assigning of responsibilities in supervision, monitoring and evaluation were desirable in the broad format of the village education plan.

(ii) Village Women

A two day workshop was organized by NIEPA for women from eight villages of the Mewat area. Held at the Centre for Rural Development of the Indian Institute of Technology (Delhi), women participants were shown a method of cooking on the smokeless chulha, including the preparation of chapatis with chopped leafy vegetables kneaded in flour. Discussions were also held on health and nutrition education and on the enrolment of girls in school. These women have been active, since their return to their villages, in disseminating the knowledge they acquired and in motivating many girls to receive education.

(iii) Religious Leaders

To involve traditional learning centres like maktabs in the programme of universalization of elementary education, a one day workshop was held at Punhana. The purpose was to help the imams understand through dialogue the importance of reading, writing and arithmetic and to urge them to introduce an education component in the maktabs. Learning materials prepared by NCERT for nonformal education, along with slates, were made available to them. Later reports indicate that the materials are being fully utilized by the maktabs and there is a continuing demand for them.

b) Village Education Committees

Detailed discussions were held with District Education Officers and other officials about the programmes of action that NIEPA had proposed. Close collaboration between Village Education Committees and heads of schools was felt to be indispensable if there were to be improvements in enrolment, retention, community support, and maintenance of school buildings.

Meetings of the Village Education Committee are held regularly in sixteen villages, and in nine of these three times a month. A register is maintained in every village containing information on the village profile, the village education plan, and the minutes of meetings. The Village Education Committee has played a vital role in the formal sector by canvassing the importance of education in the development process. Members of the Committee have visited all households in different villages and convinced parents to send those children to school who had earlier dropped out. In addition, they have been active in ensuring retention of the students enrolled.

A measure of the success of this strategy can be gauged from the steep rise in the enrolment figures. A survey carried out at the end of the school year showed that there had been sustained retention over the year.

Table 1 shows quantitative achievements during the first phase of the life of the project. During a very short period, the enrolment of girls has increased almost threefold, although there is considerable scope for further improvement as the enrolment ratio is still around 39%. Analysis of the village-wise

data shows that the percentage increase in the enrolment of children in the relevant age group, in fifteen out of twenty selected villages, has been more than 30%. In the village of Rehira, the enrolment has doubled. In Pemakhera, Raipur and Tundlaka, the enrolment of boys has touched 100% (although in others the trend is not nearly so encouraging).

Bringing about such an increase in enrolment involves problems which were not always foreseen, such as the lack of adequate accommodation. As enrolments pick up, the need for additional buildings is felt, but of course they cannot be created in a short period of

Table 1

Enrolment Patterns in the Selected Villages*

	School-going Population	Enrolment Position	
		Beginning of Project	End of First Phase
Boys	1936	856 (44.22%)	1752 (90.5%)
Girls	1314	164 (12.48%)	508 (38.66%)
Total	3250	1020 (31.39%)	2260 (69.54%)

*Percentages represent gross enrolment ratios.

time. The magnitude of the problem is shown in Shahchokha where the present school enrolment is 205 but only two room accommodation is available. Consistent efforts are needed to create additional infrastructure with the active assistance of community and government agencies.

c) Nonformal Aspects

It was considered that the setting up of village learning centres would be of immense value to the villagers in programmes of adult and nonformal education. Books and learning materials were made available to the community through these centres which were primarily aimed at creating an urge for literacy in the community and enabling them to acquire some knowledge about issues of topical interest. The response from the community to these centres has been very encouraging.

Moreover, it is very important that there should be a forum for women so that their interest in the various activities is maintained. For this purpose, the establishment of mahila mandals (women's clubs or forums) was proposed. With the help of the Gram Seviks and others, mahila mandals have been constituted in eight villages.

Discussion of Project ARISE

Any single-service centred project has a limited area of influence. Its own progress is circumscribed by the factors impeding or supporting that particular sector. It is partly due to this reason that most micro level planning and management models recommend integrated development strategies. Such strategies, though, require a total control of rural life which is usually not possible. As a result, most

development projects tend to focus on a few selected sectors, hoping that the residual unplanned sectors will respond automatically as second order effects. ARISE addresses itself to education as the key element in the development process. Success in spreading education, it is anticipated, will unleash a positive effect on other sectors of development.

Because the project is sponsored by the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration, a training-cum-research institution, the project is not seen as being rolled out inflexibly by the government. It is not a voluntary organization project, nor the vested interest of some single community faction. The project is seen to be promoted by a "third party" which has no direct stake in the outcome, in the people, or in the region.

Unlike some other development planning projects, this one is not contingent upon the investment of additional resources in the region. Projects which require huge investments tend to become so exclusive and costly that they are more a special case of development which in turn restricts the generalization of such projects to other situations. The fact that ARISE does not depend upon such huge investments facilitates replication of the model, although it may also act as a constraint on the working of the project by removing what may be a major source of inducement both for those conducting the project and for the target groups.

But it forces the development agency to resort to non-monetary ways of mobilizing and managing the community. Non-availability of resources cannot be used as an excuse for failure to perform, because the model depends not upon such resource investments but on organizational and administrative reforms.

Often sector-specific development projects do not approach their clients directly. They first approach the target groups through some other service which is known to be easily acceptable. For example, the villagers may be in need of drinking water or some medical help, but once they have accepted the needed help and have come to develop some trust in the change agents, they may be more receptive to other initiatives.

ARISE, being a single-sector development project, also had to identify those factors which might assist in furthering the cause of education in the region. For education to be in demand, it had to be demonstrated as directly useful for the rural poor, their life style and their beliefs. ARISE identified several problems which were quite pressing in these villages. For example, it was found that women, all of whom were nearly illiterate, suffered due to poor kitchen stoves. Provision of kitchen stoves was thus seen as a necessary step in terms of establishing rapport with them. The provision of this facility was not a "trap" but had tremendous benefits for the users, saving them time, effort and money. Once this aspect of the project had been effected, it was observed that the approach of village women to the efforts of the project staff and their attitude towards them underwent a great change. They were more willing to talk to project staff and it was then easier to convince them to undergo adult education classes or to send their daughters to school.

Similarly, the project staff identified the key problems which male members of the society were facing, ranging from routine problems of cultivation, irrigation, availability of new seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, to finding employment, infrastructural deficiencies and low earnings. For

them, it was important to be able to see the immediate application of education in easing some of these problems. Education had to be relevant to be useful.

The strategy of the project was to explain to inhabitants the process and the limited role of the project staff in this larger setting of development. It made the staff look like fellow beings operating in the limited domain. They did not have any magic wand with them. A bond of empathy was created in this process of sharing the mutual limited role. It certainly was a new insight for the villagers, as they had earlier seen the urbane educated civil servant only as a demi-god.

This relationship between the project staff and the clientele is perhaps one of the most important aspects of ARISE. Their individual personalities, their socio-cultural background, their present position in the hierarchy of government and administrative positions, all seem to matter in creating a positive response in the minds of the clientele group. Their sex composition was as much an important factor as were their own religious background and persuasions.

Once the project staff had succeeded in conveying the education picture of these villages to the inhabitants, the next step was to mobilize them to take some measures to alleviate this condition. Since the project staff did not have any special resources, nor did they pretend that they did, the message that the villagers received was that of self-help. They were made to recognize the problem and were brought face to face with the realization that no agency can help them more than they themselves.

For this purpose, several meetings of the residents had to be arranged. Initially there was some reluctance, but very soon no one could escape as the collective pressure of the community was beginning to build. Since most of the educated persons and the village leaders were also involved, their presence implied a demonstration in favour of education.

These gatherings also provided an opportunity for discussing the experiences of the villagers in regard to education. Many of them had earlier been sending their children to school but had withdrawn them due to reasons such as perceived irrelevance, demands on time and resources, non-availability of pupils for other work, absence or irregularity of the teacher, or poor quality of education. Since quite often the village teacher was also present in these meetings, it provided a good opportunity for clarifying these issues and bringing the opposite parties to share a common viewpoint. Teachers were particularly in a position to elaborate upon the attendance of the pupils, the provisions of several benefits and incentives available to the village school, or to girl students and other weaker sections. In this sense, these meetings were directly responsible for bringing the educational institutions closer to the client groups.

These meetings were also used to identify the problems of the weaker and/or poorer sections of the villages. Once the public awareness had been raised, collective efforts and mutual help presented themselves as honourable solutions. Every time the committee met, a collection of money and materials on a voluntary basis was carried out to create a community kitty of resources. Such a collection could be used to provide for any help, say uniforms for the girl students or some nominal bursary or scholarship.

The project staff also joined in such collections, their personal contribution being indicative of their commitment to the cause of the project. On the other hand, since the contributions of the staff were also nominal or meagre amounts, they once again underlined the need for self-dependence and mutual help. It was not that the project staff were not in a position to provide the money and other resources for the villagers, but that as a strategy it was decided not to do so lest, by bringing help from outside, local initiative would be smothered.

Once such consciousness was kindled amongst the villagers, it was only a matter of time before they started making demands upon the development functionaries in their regions. They wanted schools to be held regularly, and they wanted their teachers to attend the schools and be responsible for the learning of the students. More importantly, their demands were not confined to education, but also, for example, that the supply of electricity in the region should be more regular, that the irrigation department should pay more attention to providing timely supplies of water and should take steps to prevent flooding and so on.

The widening interests of the villagers had a mixed reaction amongst the project staff themselves. On the one hand, it signified that their efforts were beginning to bear fruit and that the conscientization of the rural people had begun to take place. On the other hand, widening of the scope of their interests meant that the villagers would not be satisfied with their progress in education alone. Yet the scope of the project did not permit or envisage incursions into other areas of development. Being essentially a sectoral programme, project staff had to hold their initiative and enthusiasm in check when it came to

other development sectors. Moreover, the development functionaries did not waste any time locating the cause of excessive demands upon them. They were quizzical about the activities of the project staff and certainly resented the fact that their operations were now being discussed in public and becoming known to outsiders.

The attitudes of the senior officers in the district and state departments were less defensive. They became aware of the field situations obtaining in their jurisdictions and were assisted in supervising and monitoring their subordinate officers in a better manner. As a matter of fact, several of them made a point of visiting the project villages, to study the activities, and to suggest the replication of these methods by subordinate officials in other regions of the district and of the state.

The local leaders of the community, members of the state legislature and members of the parliament were also quite often invited to the meetings of the village education committees. Once they were also aware of the stirrings in the masses, they took it upon themselves to voice the needs in other forums. Not only did this add to the interest which the region otherwise evoked, but it also helped in getting more resources than the region would otherwise have had.

The fact that the education committees were operating simultaneously in twenty villages created a sense of healthy competition. Very soon the leading villages were identified, as well as those that were lagging behind. These variations depended upon a score of factors. Nevertheless, members of the educational committees of the leading villages visited the slow performing villages, providing additional pressure on

the leaders of the slower villages to improve upon their achievements.

Another aspect which probably made some impact on the village schools and the target group was the fact that, once the project was known, several study groups began visiting them. Within the first two years, more than ten trips were made by outsiders visiting schools, talking with members of the village education committees, interacting with the villagers, hearing the children sing songs and watching them perform dances, examining the products of the village craftsmen. The villages found a forum, a medium and an audience to share their achievements. It made the project all the more dear as this was the catalytic agent which had brought them the limelight.

Similarly, members of the village education committees were invited to the project headquarters at NIEPA. They came and discussed their problems in the wood-paneled air-conditioned rooms while seated in the comfortable chairs of executives. What kind of cultural shock this exposure to the usual ambience of the academic establishments must have brought to these rural folk is difficult to say with any authority. But it is clear that it gave them for once a feeling that these places were theirs and were working for them.

More importantly, such an exercise was carried out for selected women of these villages. They also came out and spent a few days in the Institute and lived in its hostel. There is no doubt that it must have been a tremendous experience for them in broadening their horizons and improving their realization about the seriousness of the national goal of female literacy. The experience needs to be evaluated while keeping in mind the fact that these women belong to

those social sections that are not allowed to stay alone at all except with their family and relatives.

Conclusion

As a follow-up action for the second phase of the project, four training and orientation programmes are visualized for the community. These are to be for members of the village education committees, managers of traditional institutions like maktabs and pathahalas, teachers in primary schools and adult education centres, and women from the villages.

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